

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended). A method in a redemption system for determining which awards to redeem, the method comprising:
 - maintaining an award history database that includes award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, the type of award;
 - maintaining an encumbrance database that describes types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers;
 - receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards at a chosen supplier;
 - determining allowed awards that can be redeemed with the chosen supplier;
 - determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of allowed awards and the data in the encumbrance database; and
 - determining which of the allowed awards, having different encumbrance levels, to redeem based on the encumbrance levels.
2. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on expiration dates of the allowed awards.
3. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein determining which of the allowed awards to redeem is further based on dates on which the allowed awards were earned.
4. (Currently Amended). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award includes according to from which promotion the award was earned.
5. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award includes from which business the award was earned.

6. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award indicates black-out dates on which the award cannot be redeemed.

7. (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein the type of award indicates a classification of the award.

8. (Currently Amended). A method in a redemption system for determining which awards to redeem, the method comprising:

maintaining an award history database that includes award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and including, for each earned award, an expiration date, an earning date, and the type of award;

maintaining an encumbrance database that describes restrictions on redeeming types of awards;

receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards;

determining allowed awards that may be redeemed based on the expiration date and the types of awards;

determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of the allowed awards and the restrictions on redeeming the allowed awards as maintained in the encumbrance database;

determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the earning date; and

determining which of the allowed awards, having different encumbrance levels, to redeem based on the encumbrance levels.

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the encumbrance database describes types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers;

wherein receiving a request to redeem further comprises receiving an indication of a chosen supplier at which to redeem the awards; and

wherein determining allowed awards is further based on the chosen supplier.

12. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award depends on the promotion with which the award was earned.

13. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award depends on the business with which the award was earned.

14. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award depends on black-out dates on which the award cannot be redeemed.

15. (Previously presented). The method of claim 8 wherein the type of award indicates a classification of the award.

16. (Cancelled).

17. (Currently Amended). In a network promotion system, a system for determining which awards to redeem, the system comprising:

a first memory that stores award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, an expiration date and an earning date;

a second memory that stores information related to types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers;

a processor coupled to the first memory and the second memory and operable to perform the steps of:

receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards at a chosen supplier;

determining allowed awards that can be redeemed at the chosen supplier; and

determining encumbrance levels of the allowed awards based on the types of allowed awards and the data in the encumbrance database; and

determining which of the allowed awards, having different encumbrance levels, to redeem based on the encumbrance levels.

18. (Original). The system of claim 17 wherein the first memory and the second memory are a common memory with storage areas for award transaction information and information related to types of awards that cannot be redeemed at one or more suppliers.

19. (Currently Amended). In a network promotion system, a system for determining which awards to redeem, the system comprising:

an award history database that stores award transaction information that describes awards earned by a consumer and, for each earned award, an expiration date and an earning date;

an encumbrance database that describes restrictions on redeeming types of awards; and

a processor coupled to the award history database and the encumbrance database, and operable to perform the steps of:

- A) receiving a request to redeem an amount of the earned awards;
 - B) determining allowed awards that may be redeemed based on the expiration date;
 - C) determining which of the allowed awards to redeem based on the earning date;
- and
- D) determining allowed awards, having different encumbrance levels, to redeem based on encumbrance levels.

20-21. (Cancelled).